

Vilas County Forestry, Recreation, & Land Committee Minutes

2 April 2014

Members Present: Ralph Sitzberger, Chair
Maynard Bedish
Charles Rayala, Jr.
Stephen Favorite, County Board Chair

Members Not Present: Leon Kukanich
Member Excused: Sig Hjemvick, Vice Chair

Others Present: Lawrence Stevens, CF, Forest Administrator
John Gagnon, CF, Assistant Administrator
Dale Mayo, Recreation Administrator
Constance Valkenaar, Administrative Secretary
Cindy Burzinski, Tourism/Publicity Dept.
Ken Anderson, Media
Rocky Caffarella, Art Kunde
George/Louise Engelbrecht, Russell Nelson, Donald Barlow, Duane/Peggy Anderson, Mary Nelson, Attorney Ralph Koopman, Todd Morgan: item #5b

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Sitzberger, who advised that this was a public meeting and that notification of the meeting with the agenda was sent to the Committee members, the County Board Chairman, the Vilas County Clerk, the Vilas County Corporation Counsel, the Vilas County News-Review, the Lakeland Times, FYI Wisconsin, Radio Stations WRJO and Coyote 93.7, and the Northwoods River News. The notice and agenda were also posted on the Courthouse and Forestry Department bulletin boards. This notification was verified by the Forestry Department Administrative Secretary.

- 1) Motion by Rayala, seconded by Favorite to approve the agenda in any order at the discretion of the Chair. Motion carried unanimously.
- 2) Motion by Rayala, seconded by Bedish, to approve the minutes of the 5 & 13 March 2014 meetings, with the correction that Bedish was excused (not present) from the 5 March 2014 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.
- 3) Request to have judgment vacated on Tax Deed Parcel #6-1191: Koopman addressed the Committee. Koopman presented the reasons his client, Marilyn Picman, should be allowed to redeem Tax Deed #6-1191, which is now the property of Vilas County via tax deed foreclosure in October 2013. Koopman made the point that the Committee usually has granted similar requests in the past. Several property owners from West Camp 12 Lake voiced their concerns about future use of the parcel should the property remain in County hands; they advised that they do not wish for the public to have access to West Camp 12 Lake. Supervisors Favorite, Rayala, Sitzberger, and Bedish voiced their opinions regarding the matter. Chairman Sitzberger advised that the Treasurer's office performed all duties required by law and in fact, went beyond the requirements in attempts to insure that Picman was fully informed as to the status of

her property taxes and the consequences of non-payment, i.e., foreclosure. Motion by Favorite, seconded by Rayala, to direct Corporation Counsel to vacate the judgment on tax deed parcel #6-1191 and extend the opportunity to the Picmans to redeem their back taxes as well as the first 6 months of the year 2014 plus any other associated costs Vilas County has incurred over the past 4 years. It is noted within this motion that the 2014 taxes will be a projected amount to be determined by the Treasurer, as this parcel is not on the 2014 tax roll. Said total amount, to be determined by the County Treasurer, is to be paid in full to the County Treasurer within 30 days of today's date. Motion carried, with Sitzberger voting nay. Attorney Koopman was directed by Favorite to contact the County Treasurer.

- 4) Discover Wisconsin: Stevens advised that there is going to be a "Discover Wisconsin" episode featuring the County Forests (20 counties; 4.2 million acres). The Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA) is asking for help. The cost of the episode to the WCFA is \$36,000.00. The Committee has been provided a list of counties which have committed to donating toward the cost. Stevens asked if the Committee is interested in contributing funds toward this end. Discussion. Motion by Favorite, seconded by Rayala, to approve \$2,000.00 contribution to the WCFA with the condition that the Finance Director along with the Forestry Dept. staff, with input from Tourism/Publicity Department, bring back a recommendation to the Forestry/Recreation Committee at the next meeting. Motion carried unanimously.
- 5) Tax Deed Parcel #26-2885: The Committee had directed that staff examine this 52.32 acre tax deed tract of land located in the Town of Washington and adjacent to Voyageur Lake to evaluate the timber there. Gagnon reported that on the condition and appraised value of the timber present (\$21,000.00). He reported that the timber is mostly Hemlock (which the State and County rarely cut) and recommended that the County keep the parcel intact. Discussion. No decision made as to disposition of this parcel.
- 6) Forest Management: Gagnon gave his report, a copy of which is attached.
- 7) Timber Sale Contract Extensions: One year timber sale contract extensions are required in order for 4 pending timber sales to be completed. Motion by Rayala, seconded by Favorite, to approve extensions for Contracts numbered 881, 891, 902 & 903 for one year. Motion carried unanimously.
- 8) County Forest Aerial Photography: Resolution to approve the aerial photography project was reviewed by the Committee. Motion by Rayala, seconded by Favorite, to forward resolution to the County Board. Motion carried unanimously.
- 9) Forestry Summer Help: Stevens advised that Daniel Natzke has been hired with a possible start date of beginning of May. Stevens advised that he will be going to Personnel Committee to ask them to set a wage range for this position. Motion by Favorite, seconded by Rayala, to request that the Personnel Committee establish a salary range for the forestry summer help and fill the position accordingly. Motion carried unanimously.
- 10) Stewardship Grant: Stevens reported that CB Resolution to purchase the Denton Lake 40 was submitted to the BCPL.
- 11) Snowmobile Trail Safety Committee Report: Committee received this in advance of the meeting and has reviewed the same. Mayo advised that highlights include: trail opening policy, which remains the Friday following the deer muzzle-loader season; Oneida County wants to co-op with Vilas on Channel 12 ads; improved County safety record in regard to reduction of fatalities.

- 12) Fat Tire Bicycles: Mayo advised that there are concerns from the Snowmobile Alliance about growing popularity of fat tire bikes and their use on snowmobile trails. Upon direction of the Committee to gather information about what other Wisconsin counties are doing about the fat bike issue, Mayo talked with Jane Severt of the Wisconsin County Forests Association (WCFA), who advised that fat bikes are not allowed on ski and snowmo trails because of safety concerns and lack of authority to allow that use of trails on privately owned lands. The agreements with private landowners are for snowmobile trail use only. Mayo advised that the request came from the Snowmobile Alliance that the Forestry Committee take action to prohibit bikes on groomed snowmobile trails. The Chair advised Mayo to confer with Corporation Counsel and come back to the Committee with a proposal.
- 13) Snowmobile Program Revenues: AB407 was signed into law as Wisconsin Act 142. This means a 3-year \$30.00 registration fee combined with an annual trail pass. There will be meetings with DNR to discuss implementation/enforcement strategies.
- 14) Monthly Budget Summary: No problems noted.
- 15) Next meeting set for 1 May 2014 at 9:00 a.m. at the Courthouse Conference Rooms.
- 16) Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Minutes reflect the recorder's (Valkenaar) notations and are subject to approval by the appropriate board or committee.